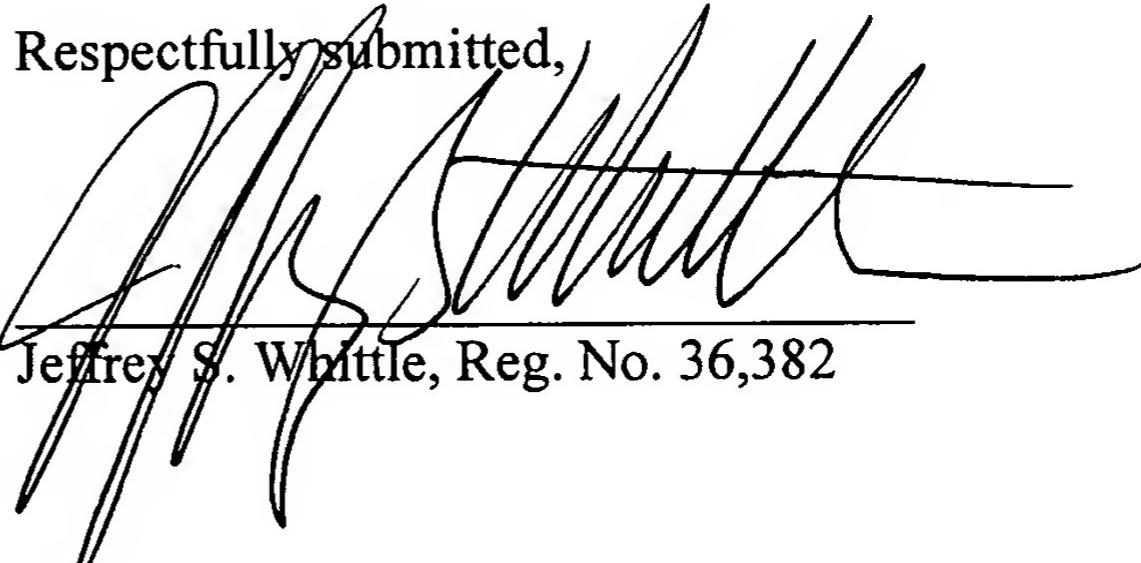


REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough examination of the present application, and Applicant has properly cancelled Claims 1-22, 32-33, and 36-44 without prejudice (see also Preliminary Amendment dated 9/5/2003). To further clarify the claimed invention, Applicant has amended Claims 25, 46-47, and 50 without prejudice. These amendments to the claims are without prejudice as to patentability, including as to any doctrine of equivalents issues. Applicant includes a Terminal Disclaimer herewith to address the concerns expressed regarding double patenting (see pp. 2-3 of Official Action).

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the issuance of a Notice of Allowance in due course is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


Jeffrey S. Whittle, Reg. No. 36,382

Date: November 17, 2004

BRACEWELL & PATTERSON, L.L.P.
P.O. Box 61389
Houston, Texas 77208-1389
Telephone: (713) 221-1189